

Commodities Imported into (Schedule A) and Exported from the United States (Schedule B). At the present time the Budget Bureau is undertaking the preliminary review to determine whether it should attempt to develop a standard occupational classification for statistical purposes. A revision of the Industrial Classification manual was just released this year as was a revision of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

While standard classifications are essential to comparable data, more efforts must also be devoted to a closer examination of the consistency in fact of actual classifications. For the industrial classification, in particular, there is clear need for an official Federal directory of establishments and firms which can be used by all the statistical agencies of Government so that checks can be made to insure uniform classification in accordance with the manual.

The Bureau of the Budget also issues other standards with respect to methods of compiling statistical reports, establishing a common reference base for index numbers, establishing uniform reporting periods for employment and payrolls, and certain definitions. It is my impression that we have not done enough in this area for present needs.

Federal-State-local relationships

The relationship of Federal, State, and local governmental statistical activities has received an increasing amount of attention during the past few years. This new surge of interest was largely aroused by the governors of the several States themselves. In each year since 1964, the National Governors' Conference has by resolution noted the need to develop valid and comparable statistical information in order that programs and program operations in different States may be appraised properly.

Acting in cooperation with the Council of State Governments, the National Governors' Conference sponsored a National Conference on Comparative Statistics, which was held on February 23-25, 1966. The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, the Municipal Finance Officers Association, and the Bureau of the Budget served as co-sponsors for the Conference. I served as a member of the steering committee of that Conference.

The Conference's agenda was a wide-ranging exploration of the information needs for decision-making by State and local governments. The Conference's principal recommendations were that:

Each State should establish (or designate) a statistical coordination/standardization unit.

There should be a continuing forum for the development of improved statistical data in functional areas where appropriate.

There should be a continuing body to provide the necessary links between the States and the Federal Government to assure the continuing and persistent attention necessary to secure improvements in the comparability of statistical information.

On another front, the National Association of State Budget Officers and the Council of State Governments have been concerned for some time about the interrelationships between increasing requirements for information arising out of Federal grant-in-aid programs, the increasing use of electronic data processing equipment, and the comparability of information designed to serve the needs of program managers and over-all executive management. Originally oriented primarily to problems related to data processing, this interest has shifted to the general area of information systems.

We have welcomed both of these efforts. We have added a member to the staff of the Office of Statistical Standards who has the primary responsibility of working on matters relating to Federal-State statistical coordination. The Bureau of the Budget through OSS has also agreed to provide the secretariat for the continuing body recommended by the National Conference on Comparative Statistics.

An Intergovernmental Task Force on Information Systems has been established by Director of the Bureau of the Budget and by the Council of State Governments to consider the problems and opportunities which arise out of the flow of information between the various levels of Government in the Federal system. It is chaired by Mr. John Kennedy, Special Assistant on Intergovernmental Relations to the Governor of Illinois. It consists of two representatives from State governments, two from county governments, two from local governments, a representative from the Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Rela-